

News Release

Senator Pete V. Domenici

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMITTEE APPROVES \$5 MILLION REQUESTED BY DOMENICI TO IMPLEMENT "HIGH SCHOOLS AT COMMUNITY COLLEGE" PLAN

New Mexico Jobs and Education Programs Funded in Bill

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Pete Domenici today reported that the Senate Appropriations Committee has approved his request for \$5 million to begin implementing the "High School at Community Colleges" program, an innovative new effort to provide high school students with the job skills needed for employment.

The funding for the High Schools at Community Colleges program, an initiative created by Domenici in 1998, is included in the **FY2001 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Bill**. The committee approved the bill today and forwarded it for full Senate consideration.

Domenici also reported New Mexico-related funding in the bill. Domenici, who supported today's committee vote by proxy, is in northern New Mexico Thursday to monitor fire suppression efforts to control the Cerro Grande Fire now ravaging Los Alamos.

The "High Schools at Community Colleges" program will bring educators and employers together to offer high school students the skills training they need in both academic and vocational areas with practical work-based learning. Graduating students will possess the skills they need to succeed in the local workforce.

The \$5 million secured by Domenici for the High Schools at Community Colleges is provided within the federal Vocational and Adult Education Tech-Prep program.

"This program can be a unique way of better preparing students for taking actual jobs as soon as they graduate from high school," Domenici said. "I think New Mexico's community colleges have some very innovative training programs that could easily be made available to high school students."

Under the "High Schools at Community Colleges" program, a consortium would have to contain a business partner to take an active role in ensuring that graduating students possess the tools and knowledge they will need to succeed. The business partner will also act as a gateway for student

and teacher internships and provide students a head start in obtaining jobs.

“I believe this is an innovative approach to opening vocational opportunities to our students, and giving them a head start on the types of academic and vocational skills they will need to secure a good job once they graduate,” Domenici said.

The program created within the Tech-Prep program will allow consortia of local schools, community colleges, and employers to utilize grant funds to locate these high schools directly at community colleges where many vocational programs are already taught.

Domenici also praised the approval of \$62.25 million, an increase of \$20.25 million above 2000, for the Department of Education’s Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) program. The HSI program provides resources for universities and community schools that have large Hispanic student enrollments to improve their curriculum and Hispanic student retention. There are 17 New Mexico schools designated as HSIs.

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HSI funding is provided under Title V of the Higher Education Act, to help two- and four-year HSI schools develop curricula, purchase books and equipment, renovate and improve facilities, develop faculty, and other activities to strengthen the programs at HSIs. New Mexico has received a total of \$8.8 million in HSI funds since the program’s continuing grants began in 1995. Included in that figure were two grants awarded in 1999 totaling \$1.2 million.

There are nearly 24,000 Hispanic college students at the 17 New Mexico colleges and universities designated as HSIs, which include: Albuquerque Technical Vocational Institute, College of Santa Fe, College of the Southwest-Hobbs, Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell, Luna Vocational Technical Institute-Las Vegas, New Mexico Highlands University-Las Vegas, New Mexico Junior College-Hobbs, New Mexico State University (NMSU) Las Cruces, NMSU-Carlsbad, NMSU-Doña Ana, NMSU-Grants, Northern New Mexico Community College-Española, Santa Fe Community College, University of New Mexico (UNM)-Los Alamos, UNM-Taos Education Center, UNM-Valencia County Branch, and Western New Mexico University-Silver City.

The following New Mexico-related projects were also funding in the FY2001 Labor-HHS Appropriations Bill, as requested by Domenici:

Character Education: \$12.3 million provided, an increase of \$5 million above the 2000 level, to be targeted to youth violence prevention initiatives;

Hantavirus Research: \$3.5 million through the Centers for Disease Control for Hantavirus research nationwide, with Domenici-requested language strongly encouraging that a portion of these funds be used for a New Mexico Hantavirus initiative to educate the public and medical personnel on the prevention of the disease. The cost of the proposed education project is \$761,000 and would be implemented by the Navajo Division of Health which treats the most at-risk population (\$701,000) in cooperation with the Department of Health (\$60,000).

Tribal Colleges: \$10 million for Tribal Colleges, an increase of \$4 million above 2000 and \$1 million over the president's request; and \$5.6 million for Tribally-controlled post-secondary vocational institutions which includes Crownpoint (CIT).

Indian Education Programs: \$115.5 million for Indian education programs, an increase of \$38.5 million above 2000. This includes \$92.8 million for grants to local education agencies (+ \$30.8 million), and \$20 million for special programs for Indian children (+ \$6.7 million), and \$2.7 million for national activities (+ \$1.0 million).

Hispanic Serving Institutions: \$62.25 million, an increase of \$20.25 million above 2000 and the same as the president's request.